

Executive Summary

The Demonstration Program for Innovative Housing Design was established in 1998 to test housing concepts that could diversify Seattle's housing and provide alternatives to living in a conventional house, condominium, or apartment. It allowed flexibility for development not currently allowed under existing regulations, including cottages and detached accessory dwelling units, while remaining consistent with the City's land use, housing, and neighborhood goals.

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether these housing types are appropriate to allow outright, and if so, what development standards are appropriate to regulate them.

A combination of neighbor surveys and comments, owner/applicant interviews, urban design analysis, staff interviews, and review of permit files have provided invaluable information and lessons learned about each project.

This evaluation covers four detached ADUs and one cottage housing project constructed through the Demonstration Program as of April, 2003. Evaluation of two constructed height departure and small lot residential projects, as well as other projects still under construction, will take place at the end of 2003.

Detached ADU Findings

The Demonstration Program allowed detached ADUs across a variety of neighborhood types. All were found to be successful, based on a permit process and urban design analysis, neighborhood survey results, and evaluation criteria set forth in the original Demonstration Program ordinance.

The findings of the Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) are that detached ADUs can work in different types of neighborhoods, and that there are certain

types of lots that are more appropriate than others for detached ADUs. Larger lots, corner lots, and lots on alleys put more physical space between detached ADUs and neighboring residences, and are places where new dwellings should be encouraged. Other, smaller lots have also been shown to work, as long as the size of the detached ADU is appropriate and it is designed well.

The Demonstration Program detached ADUs bring several issues and successes to light in considering new development standards, design guidelines, and processes. DCLU will consider:

- ensuring a proper maximum allowed height of detached ADUs to limit perceived bulk and scale, privacy, and shadow impacts;
- limiting the total allowed floor area and footprint of detached ADUs to further ensure scale compatibility, neighborhood fit, and to maintain open space:
 - using floor area ratios to regulate the size of detached ADUs to ensure a proper fit;
 - maintaining a maximum amount of lot coverage when adding a detached ADU;
- requiring a minimum lot size for new detached ADUs to limit crowding;
- requiring appropriate setbacks for detached ADUs built on parcels without alleys to limit open space and privacy impacts.
- using development standards that favor alley locations when allowing detached ADUs;
- balancing neighborhood architectural compatibility versus primary structure compatibility in the Design Review process used to allow detached ADUs;

- using a discretionary review process such as administrative Design Review to shape detached ADUs, potentially including:
 - detached ADU scale, color, and materials that match or are complementary to the existing home;
 - the treatment of blank walls;
 - the location of windows to minimize privacy issues;
 - landscape requirements to limit privacy impacts; and
 - flexibility to achieve a more innovative or modern design.

Cottage Findings

The Seattle Land Use Code includes requirements for Residential Small Lot and Cottage Housing Developments (SMC 23.43.012). Cottages are currently allowed only in multi-family zones or in the Residential Small Lot (RSL) zone, which is not widely mapped. Through the Demonstration Program, DCLU has found that for the most part, these standards successfully provide the basic development standards for this housing type, with only minor changes necessary.

Successes and issues related to cottage development were raised by the Demonstration Program. DCLU will consider:

- requirements or guidelines for scale and materials of cottages to complement the adjacent homes;
- limits on the floor area, height, and scale of cottages;
- landscape requirements for cottages; and
- whether carriage units should be allowed in addition to cottages.

Design review for cottage housing is recommended to help address basic design principles

to improve future cottage developments. Additional design guidelines that address open space would be helpful.

Process Findings

These conclusions highlight strengths and weaknesses of the Demonstration Program for Innovative Housing Design to be considered if there are future programs:

- On the whole, the Design Review process was very successful in the review and shaping of selected Demonstration Projects.
- With the right development standards, staff training, and design guidelines, detached ADUs can be effectively administered without Design Review.
- Due to their more comprehensive change to a site, the Design Review process should be used to better help cottages fit into their surroundings.

Neighborhood Sentiment

At the project level, the results found in the neighborhood surveys were quite positive. The findings listed below are brief summaries of overall ratings.

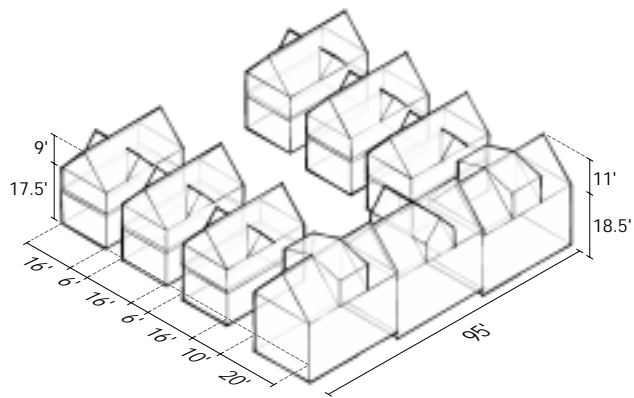
- The impacts of all projects were rated neutral or positive much more than negative.
- Respondents generally expressed support for the idea of smaller infill housing.
- Many have concerns about traffic and parking.
- People who opposed more housing almost always cited traffic and parking impacts as their primary concern.

Project Summaries

Ravenna Cottages

The Ravenna Cottages project in the Green Lake neighborhood demonstrates the Demonstration Program's Cottage "Type B" category—cottages with carriage units. Carriage units are essentially small cottages above garages, and in the case of Ravenna Cottages, the carriages share common walls.

Six cottages line two sides of a courtyard that is fenced and gated from the street. At the back of the courtyard sit three carriage units located above nine garages lining the alley.



This drawing illustrates the dimensions of Ravenna Cottages.

Neighborhood Impact Survey Results

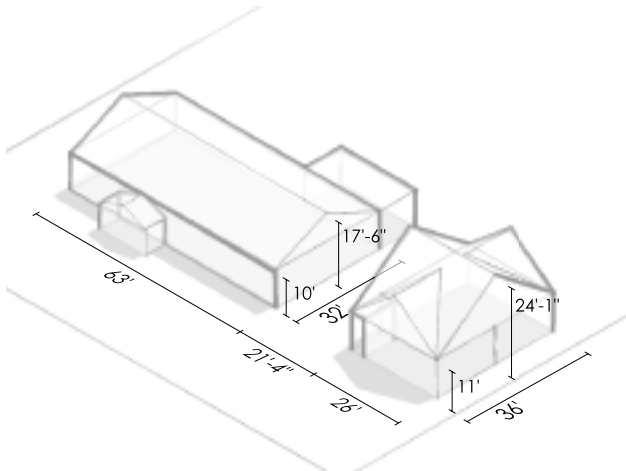
28%	27%	45%
<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>



Ravenna Cottages uses a subtle variety of complementary colors to help minimize its visual impact.

Magnolia Detached ADU

This detached ADU in Magnolia sits at the rear of a large corner lot next to an alley amidst a single family residential area.



Neighborhood Impact Survey Results

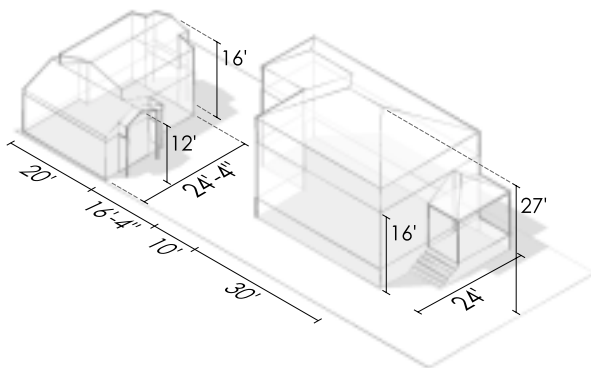
16%	19%	65%
<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>



A view of the primary structure (left) next to the detached ADU (right).

North Capitol Hill Detached ADU

The detached ADU structure, tucked behind the main home and barely noticeable from the street, replaced an existing detached garage.



Neighborhood Impact Survey Results

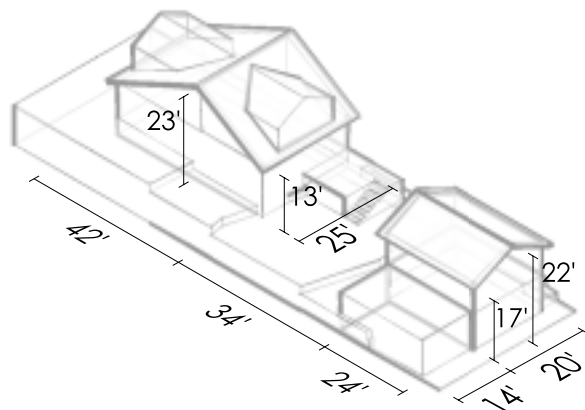
14%	30%	56%
<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>



The detached ADU matches the main home.

Green Lake Detached ADU

This detached ADU sits above a redeveloped detached garage on an alley.



Neighborhood Impact Survey Results

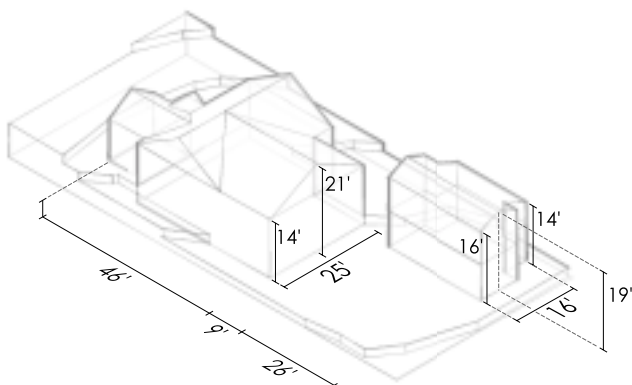
19%	22%	59%
<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>



The detached ADU sits on an alley above a two-car garage, next to a one-car garage with patio above.

Licton Springs Detached ADU

This detached ADU project in the Licton Springs neighborhood near Green Lake replaced an existing detached accessory unit with a larger dwelling. A parking space was added to provide one space for the main home and one for the detached ADU.



Neighborhood Impact Survey Results

47%	21%	33%
<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>



Vegetation helps screen the detached ADU (center) from the street. The main home is to the right.